2007-06

Counterterrorism policy in Colombia

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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

COUNTERTERRORISM POLICY IN COLOMBIA

by

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June 2007

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188

1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	2. REPORT DATE	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED
	June 2007	Master's Thesis

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Counterterrorism Policy in Colombia	**5. FUNDING NUMBERS**
6. AUTHOR(S) Self, Kevin A.	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000	**8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER**
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A	**10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER**
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.	
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited	**12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE** A

13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

The purpose of this thesis is to suggest a coherent, credible, and long-term counterterrorism policy in Colombia. The events of September 11, 2001 heightened U.S. awareness of Colombian terrorist organizations, the most powerful being the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The U.S. counterterror approach in Colombia appears fragmented, with only minor changes to its previous drug control policies. In contrast, the Colombian government has developed and implemented a policy to combat the FARC. To analyze the effectiveness of the Colombian government's efforts, this thesis takes a two-step approach. First, it aims to clearly define the threat posed by the FARC, and, in doing so, expose its center of gravity. With the intent of moving beyond the grievance versus greed debate, this thesis analyzes five characteristics of the FARC. The conclusion drawn is that it is most accurate to characterize the FARC as a 'resource-based' insurgency with territory as its center of gravity. Second, the thesis assesses current U.S. and Colombian policy and finds that it is effectively attacking the FARC's center of gravity, and these efforts must be sustained if the FARC is to be defeated or forced to the negotiating table.

14. SUBJECT TERMS Colombia, FARC, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, terrorism, counterterrorism, insurgency, counterinsurgency			**15. NUMBER OF PAGES** 77
			16. PRICE CODE
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	**18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE** Unclassified	**19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT** Unclassified	**20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT** UL

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239-18

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COUNTERTERRORISM POLICY IN COLOMBIA

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to suggest a coherent, credible and long-term counterterrorism policy in Colombia. The events of September 11, 2001 heightened U.S. awareness of Colombian terrorist organizations, the most powerful being the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The U.S. counterterror approach in Colombia appears fragmented, with only minor changes to its previous drug control policies. In contrast, the Colombian government has developed and implemented a policy to combat the FARC. To analyze the effectiveness of the Colombian government's efforts, this thesis takes a two-step approach. First, it aims to clearly define the threat posed by the FARC, and, in doing so, expose its center of gravity. With the intent of moving beyond the grievance versus greed debate, this thesis analyzes five characteristics of the FARC. The conclusion drawn is that it is most accurate to characterize the FARC as a 'resource-based' insurgency with territory as its center of gravity. Second, the thesis assesses current U.S. and Colombian policy and finds that it is effectively attacking the FARC's center of gravity, and these efforts must be sustained if the FARC is to be defeated or forced to the negotiating table.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Holly, for her unwavering faith in me to accomplish this task.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

Since 9/11 the war on terror has taken the forefront in U.S. foreign policy. The global war on terror is primarily focused on Islamist organizations based in the Middle East, but there are implications for other regions that have experienced terrorism as well. Notably, the long-held U.S. counterdrug policy in Colombia has shifted to include counterterror efforts. Two left-wing organizations in Colombia have been on the State Department's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations since 1997: the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and the National Liberation Army (ELN). A right-wing organization, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), was added to the list on September 10, 2001. While all three groups earned the label "terrorist" prior to 9/11, Washington viewed them merely as an internal threat to Colombian security and not a direct threat to U.S. interests. This viewpoint was reflected in U.S. policy, which prevented the use of counterdrug monies for counterterror purposes in Colombia.

This all changed after 9/11. The recent focus on terrorism has elevated the importance of the FARC, ELN, and AUC to the United States and U.S.-Colombia policy has shifted to incorporate terrorism. Prior to this, the United States provided millions of dollars in support of Colombia's counterdrug efforts. The policy discussed the Colombian guerrilla groups only from the perspective that eliminating the drug industry would dry up the insurgents' resource base, forcing the insurgents to disband. In 2002, the Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI) allowed funding for counterterrorism efforts. However a specific counterterrorism strategy is not developed in the policy.

This raises the question: given the fact that the United States has declared a global war on terrorism, the State Department has labeled organizations in Colombia as terrorists, and the United States is giving millions of dollars to Colombia in support of counterterrorism operations, what counterterrorism policy should Washington pursue in Colombia?

In order for the United States to wage war on terror successfully in Colombia, it should promote a policy that will allow the Colombian government to develop an effective strategy to defeat the terrorist organizations within its borders. To develop a strategy, one must first understand the enemy. In the case of Colombia, all the terrorist organizations are also insurgencies, that is, combat forces that field an army and fight for control of population and territory. Scholars typically point to two types of insurgency, grievance-based and greed-based. This literature on insurgency provides a framework to begin talking about the situation in Colombia but, as this thesis will show, it is incomplete, and, therefore, must be broadened in order to form the basis for an effective COIN strategy.

Considering the recent successful negotiations with the AUC to demobilize and the relatively small size of the ELN, this paper will focus primarily on the FARC as the target of counterterror operations in Colombia. It has been well documented that the FARC has turned to the illicit economy of narco-trafficking as a source of funding. At first, the FARC merely taxed coca cultivation and extorted money from narco-traffickers in exchange for protection, but now the FARC is directly involved in production and sales of cocaine and heroin. While they claim to still be motivated by ideological and political objectives, it is difficult to determine if these motivations remain primary. In other words, is the FARC an insurgency of "grievance" or "greed," or some combination of both? The answer to this question will help determine U.S. counterterror policy in Colombia.

The shift in U.S. foreign policy toward Colombia, allowing the diversion of monies from counterdrug efforts to counterterrorism, has potentially important implications for both countries. The FARC present a unique set of problems, different than that posed by Islamist terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda. If the United States is serious about counterterrorism in Colombia, it needs to develop a strategy tailored to the nature of that country's insurgency. If the FARC's agenda expanded beyond the borders of Colombia, possibly linking with transnational terrorist organizations, they could pose a serious threat to the United States, and one with a substantial resource base. Even if such

links are never established, the FARC present an indirect threat to the United States through their continued participation in narco-trafficking and undermining of regional stability.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on Colombia and the FARC is extensive, as is the work on insurgency and counterinsurgency (COIN). The purpose here is not to rehash that material but instead, to fill some gaps to aid in developing a possible counterterrorism policy in Colombia. As mentioned, scholars have identified two types of motivations for insurgencies—grievance-based and greed-based.[1] Grievance-based insurgencies are those that maintain ideological and political objectives. This type of insurgency was most common during the Cold War in places like Malaya, Vietnam, Cuba, and El Salvador. Greed-based insurgencies are those usually involved in the illicit economy, motivated by the pursuit of profits, and appear more like organized crime.[2] A series of studies by the World Bank in the 1990s highlighted this relatively new post-Cold War phenomenon of greed-based insurgencies.[3]

The academic debate regarding grievance- and greed-based insurgencies is useful because it recognizes that some insurgencies are motivated by more than political, ideological, cultural or religious differences—some insurgencies may be more interested

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[1] Cynthia J. Arnson and I. William Zartman, ed., *Rethinking the Economics of War: The Intersection of Need, Creed, and Greed* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Press, 2005); Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman, ed., *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 2003); Mats Berdal and David M. Malone, ed., *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner, 2000).

[2] Mark Peceny and Michael Durnan, "The FARC's Best Friend: U.S. Anti-Drug Policies and the Deepening of Colombia's Civil War in the 1990s," *Latin American Politics and Society* 48, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 97.

[3] Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "On Economic Causes of Civil War," working paper (World Bank, 1998), http://www.worldbank.org/research/conflict/papers/cw-cause.htm (accessed April 15, 2007); Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Justice-Seeking and Loot-Seeking in Civil War," working paper (World Bank, 1999), http://www.worldbank.org/research/conflict/papers/justice.htm (accessed April 15, 2007); Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," working paper (World Bank, 2001), http://www.worldbank.org/research/conflict/papers/greedandgrievance.htm (accessed April 15, 2007); Paul Collier, "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and their Implications for Policy," working paper (World Bank, 2000), http://www.worldbank.org/research/conflict/papers/civilconflict.htm (accessed April 15, 2007).

in the profits they can earn through the illicit economy. The effects of this on the characteristics of insurgencies and the implications for counterinsurgency, however, have been largely obscured by an often fruitless debate over the "true" motivations of insurgents—some analyze the evidence and conclude that an insurgency is grievance-based; others, using the same evidence, conclude that it is greed-based. Moving beyond this debate, this thesis argues that analysis of an insurgency's primary resource base (e.g., population, illegal exploitation of natural resources) often offers more insights into key characteristics of the insurgency (such as its relationship to the population, relationship with other key actors, and its organizational characteristics) than does an understanding of motives.

In addition, policy prescriptions from the grievance/greed literature are arguably misguided. While this debate over motivations goes round and round, the policymaker is left with three choices: (1) choose a grievance-based COIN strategy, focusing on the population as the center of gravity (2) choose a greed-based COIN strategy, focusing on funding sources as the center of gravity (3) or apply a combination of both strategies. This paper will demonstrate that any of these choices would be wrong. Instead, the framework for analysis developed in this thesis, with an emphasis on the resource base of the insurgency rather than its motivations, points to territory as the center of gravity for insurgencies that rely heavily on the exploitation of natural resources.[4]

The FARC is clearly an organization that relies on the drug trade for a large portion of its funding. Some vehemently argue that since becoming involved in narcotrafficking, the FARC has lost all of its ideological convictions and devolved into a greed-based insurgency. Others argue just as ardently that the FARC is still a grievance-based organization, and only participates in the drug trade to provide funding for the movement. This debate is virtually unresolvable, and it detracts from determining an effective strategy to combat the FARC. Instead of focusing on motives, this thesis

[4] I use the term "center of gravity" to mean the enemy's true source of strength, which, if removed, will eliminate the enemy's will to fight. For further amplification see, Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans., Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

analyzes how the increasing involvement of the FARC in the drug trade over time has led to changes in key characteristics of the organization and its center of gravity.

C. THE MAIN ARGUMENT

This thesis makes the case for going beyond the grievance/greed dichotomy and focusing instead on how an insurgency's primary resource base shapes its fundamental characteristics. Understanding the characteristics of an insurgency is especially useful when its motivations are debatable. A careful examination of the characteristics of an insurgency can help identify its center of gravity, and thus lead to the development of an effective COIN strategy.

Chapter II begins with an analysis of grievance- and greed-based insurgencies, which are typically distinguished according to their objectives or motivations. The chapter moves beyond this analysis, looking instead at the insurgency's primary resource base, and how that shapes its fundamental characteristics. The five characteristics to be analyzed are: (1) the insurgency's relationship to the illicit economy; (2) the political and/or ideological goals of the insurgency (its relationship to the government); (3) its relationship to the population; (4) its relationship to other armed actors; (5) its organization, to include size, strength and cohesion.

This analysis demonstrates that the two ideal type insurgencies (grievance-based and greed-based) usually identified in the literature exhibit differences across these five characteristics. For example, grievance-based insurgencies have high political and/or ideological objectives—they have a fundamental disagreement with the government and are fighting to force a change in power. Any economic opportunities presented to a grievance-based insurgency are only exploited to aid in achieving their ultimate objective. Meanwhile, greed-based insurgencies are only interested in profiting from the illicit economy; yet, they may have to participate in some political maneuvering to maintain access to the illicit economy.

Grievance-based insurgencies need popular support to achieve victory. Therefore, they recruit heavily by trying to convince the population that their ideology is superior to that espoused by the government. Greed-based insurgencies recruit or exploit

the population to aid in their illicit activities. Unlike grievance-based insurgencies that are under constant pressure to recruit, greed-based insurgencies only recruit when necessary because they are able to sustain their organization through the profits they earn.

In terms of other armed actors, grievance-based insurgencies might be more inclined than greed-based insurgencies to form alliances. Two grievance-based insurgencies with different ideologies, but similar goals of overthrowing the government, might be tempted to join forces, if only temporarily, until the government has been ousted from power. Greed-based insurgencies, on the other hand, view other armed actors as potential threats to their economic interests. Therefore, any encroachment on their turf will be met with extreme hostility.

Lastly, the two types of insurgency vary in organizational structure. A grievance-based insurgency derives its size and strength from the number of recruits it possesses; yet, no matter what size, it will be a relatively cohesive group since all participants presumably share the same ideology. A greed-based insurgency's size will largely depend on how much it is able to participate in the illicit economy. Essentially, it will grow until checked by the government or some other force. Cohesion is questionable, however, since the organization has to constantly be prepared to deal with members that may try to embezzle profits for personal gain.

The chapter goes on to introduce the counterinsurgency strategies most commonly advanced to combat grievance- and greed-based insurgencies. COIN strategies developed during the Cold War viewed gaining popular support as the key to defeating grievance-based insurgencies. The two most-widely accepted strategies are the "hearts and minds" (HAM) and cost-benefit theories. Greed-based insurgencies have only come to the forefront in the last fifteen to twenty years. The newer COIN strategies promoted to defeat greed-based insurgencies often resemble strategies used to target organized crime, i.e., the targeting of assets or economic sanctions. None of these strategies were developed to target insurgencies with dual motivations. In circumstances involving insurgencies with dual motivations, the common practice has been to use some combination of grievance- and greed-based COIN strategies.

To complete this analysis, the last section of the chapter introduces the term “resource-based” insurgency to describe insurgencies that demonstrate dual motivations. The term "resource" is used because this type of insurgency has economic interests in "lootable resources" (commodities that provide income when sold).[5] These interests, at times, force them to behave in similar fashion to greed-based insurgencies; however, like grievance-based insurgencies, they maintain an ideology and retain the ultimate goal of fighting for their political causes. Like the first two types of insurgency, resource-based insurgencies are analyzed in relation to the five characteristics listed above. From this analysis, the conclusion is drawn that existing COIN strategies for grievance- and greed-based insurgencies will be ineffective against resource-based insurgencies. Instead, a new strategy is proposed that focuses on territory as the center of gravity.

Chapter III will superimpose the general discussion of grievance-, greed-, and resource-based insurgencies introduced in Chapter II onto the situation in Colombia. It will begin with a historical overview of the FARC to provide the reader a better understanding of the organization. Particular attention will be given to the evolution of the FARC from its ideological beginnings to its increased involvement in the illegal drug trade. Next, the FARC will be analyzed in terms of the five characteristics listed in Chapter II.

This analysis reveals that the FARC most closely resembles a resource-based insurgency. The FARC's relationship to the population has become more hostile and exploitive in parallel with its increased involvement in the drug trade. The FARC has also become increasingly hostile toward other armed actors, especially the AUC and Colombian Army, which have tried to encroach on their territory. The size and strength of the FARC has also rapidly increased due, in large part, to the participation in the drug trade. The FARC has recruited more cadres and has been able to arm them with weapons purchased with drug profits. As with any organization, this rapid increase in size may

[5] Collier and Hoeffler, "Justice-Seeking and Loot-Seeking in Civil War," 1.

have some negative repercussions for the internal cohesion of the FARC. All of these factors are taken into consideration in the policy recommendations given in the next chapter.

Chapter IV begins with a background discussion of U.S. and Colombian policy toward the FARC since 2001. Plan Colombia, ACI, *Plan Patriota*, and the Democratic Security and Defense Policy of Colombia have worked together, but also at cross-purposes since 2001. U.S. policy toward Colombia has largely focused on counterdrug efforts. On the other hand, the Colombians have long been more interested in achieving security, which involves much more than simply fighting the drug problem. The availability of U.S. funds for counterterror efforts since 2002 has caused the two countries' policies to become more aligned.

The effectiveness of these policies will be measured by looking at indicators such as levels of violence, homicide rates, kidnapping rates, and numbers of insurgents. The trends show that the Colombians are making headway in their war against the FARC. I attribute this to the fact that the Colombians have identified the control of territory as a key component of their Democratic Security and Defense Policy, and have made significant progress in achieving this objective. The state's ability to control its territory is crucial in defeating a resource-based insurgency. While Washington has shown its support by continuing to fund the Colombian COIN effort, it is not clear that U.S. policymakers have explicitly drawn lessons about the correctness of the Colombian government's strategy for dealing with a resource-based insurgency.

The conclusion will summarize the main points of my arguments. It appears that the Colombians are on the right track, but it would be a mistake to underestimate the resilience of the FARC. The current Colombian administration has made security one of its primary objectives. Like in any democracy, however, change is as near as the next election. Therefore, it is important that both Colombia and the United States continue to implement and support the correct strategy to defeat the FARC.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF GRIEVANCE-, GREED-, AND RESOURCE-BASED INSURGENCIES AND STRATEGIES TO DEFEAT THEM

A. INTRODUCTION

The scholarly work on insurgencies has been extensive over the last fifty years. Insurgencies during the Cold War have been analyzed in attempts to understand the motivations of insurgencies and to develop effective measures to defeat them. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, more work was done to understand insurgencies in the new international environment. Most recently, after the events of 9/11, there has been greater focus on the insurgencies around the globe as many have been labeled "terrorists." This new focus on terrorism, while increasing awareness, has also created confusion by lumping all insurgent organizations together. This has obscured the varying motivations of the different insurgencies, promoting the misconception that all organizations can be defeated with similar strategies and tactics.

This section identifies three different types of insurgencies, those based on grievance, those based on greed, and those based on some combination of both, which I label resource-based insurgencies. Each type of insurgency demonstrates differences in characteristics that help identify it, including its relationship to the illicit economy, its relationship to the local population, its political/ideological objectives (its relationship to the government), its relationship to other armed actors, and its size and strength. Analyzing differences along each of these dimensions helps not only to identify the type of insurgency, but also to develop proper strategies and policies to defeat them.

B. CHARACTERISTICS OF GRIEVANCE-BASED INSURGENCIES

Grievance-based insurgencies are the most familiar type of insurgency because of their frequency during the Cold War. These insurgencies arise due to a sector of the population becoming disenchanted with their government and, therefore, organizing into

a group with the aim of overthrowing the government.[6] The reasons for their disenchantment could range from political, ideological, or religious differences to ethnic or economic inequality. Many of the grievance-based insurgencies that arose during the Cold War were adopted by one of the superpowers. Due to the bipolar nature of the Cold War, the United States and Soviet Union often supported these insurgencies (or the besieged governments) in an attempt to subvert or spread communism. Despite superpower involvement, financial support for insurgents often depended upon the insurgency demonstrating its viability, which hinged in large part on having popular support. Although the Cold War dynamic made the situation more complex, in most cases, original insurgent motivations were not lost.

Regardless of superpower involvement, support of the population was critical for the survival of grievance-based insurgencies.[7] Like any military-type organization, an insurgency gains strength in numbers; therefore, a large percentage of an insurgency's strength resides in the number of cadres it can recruit. Grievance-based insurgencies use their ideology or shared grievances to recruit. It is incumbent upon the insurgency to convince the potential recruit that the insurgency is right and the government is wrong. Because recruitment is based on ideology or shared grievances, the result is a relatively cohesive unit.

The population is also critical because they are the primary resource base—they provide food, money, and shelter for the insurgents. Some elements of the population may provide indirect aid to the insurgency without being actively involved in the insurgency. Insurgents often need safe-houses to hide from government actors. They also need hideouts from which to base their operations and attacks against the state. The population can also provide monetary donations which the insurgents can use to purchase

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[6] David M. Malone and Jake Sherman, "Economic Factors in Civil Wars: Policy Considerations," in *Rethinking the Economics of War*, 252.

[7] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964); Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964).

weapons or other supplies. The local population, if convinced that the cause of the insurgency is just, can provide all these forms of direct and indirect support to the insurgency.

With a strong support base among the population, and superpower sponsorship, grievance-based insurgencies had less need to engage in illegal economic activities to make money. Also, there was less opportunity to engage in illegal economic activities, as the world economy was far less global than it is now. Access to the illicit economy was, therefore, much more restricted. Of course, economic opportunities that arose were not likely wasted; yet, the proceeds from illegal activities were expected to support the movement and not be used for personal gain. The primary need for money was to purchase weapons through the local or international black market.

A grievance-based insurgency's burning desire to overthrow the government might lead to a tenuous relationship with other illegally armed actors within the state. Two insurgencies might be compelled to join forces if the defeat of the government was more likely. Such an agreement would be fragile regardless of the success of the union. In-fighting and finger pointing could erupt if the combined insurgency was unsuccessful. If the insurgency was successful, a power struggle could emerge, likely resulting in the two organizations splitting apart again. If the two insurgencies are unwilling to join forces for some reason, it is unlikely that they would become hostile to each other. They may compete over the population, as neither would want to give up their support base, however, becoming embroiled in a conflict with another insurgency would only weaken each movement and decrease any likelihood of success against the state.

1. Strategies/Policies to Defeat Grievance-based Insurgencies

Discovering an insurgency's center of gravity is crucial to policymakers and military strategists tasked with the assignment of developing strategies to combat and defeat them. Only by understanding what holds an insurgency together can a proper strategy aimed at that focal point be targeted. Analysis of grievance-based insurgencies shows that the population is their center of gravity. Without popular support, a grievance insurgency cannot exist.

The RAND Corporation recently published a report drawing lessons from the last fifty years of counterinsurgency.[8] This report represents two counterinsurgency theories that were developed during the Cold War. Both theories, "hearts and minds" (HAM) and cost/benefit, recognized the population as the center of gravity for grievance-based insurgencies. HAM is the more widely known counterinsurgency theory. The theory argues that an insurgency needs popular support to sustain its organization; conversely, the state needs popular support to defeat the insurgency.

Roger Trinquier, writing about France's involvement in Vietnam and Algeria, noted the importance of popular support in a counterinsurgency operation. The local population can provide invaluable intelligence since they "know certain key persons in the enemy organization…who live in permanent contact with the population."[9] Gaining the support of the locals also serves to "cut the guerrilla off from the population that sustains him."[10] In order to gain popular support, the state must provide security and convince the population that it is operating in the best interests of its citizens.[11]

Cost/benefit theory countered the basic tenet of HAM theory on how the counterinsurgent should gain the support of the population. Cost/benefit theorists focused on the decision-making process of the population. They concluded that the population acted "as rational actors that would respond in more or less predictable ways to incentives and sanctions from the competing systems of insurgent and counterinsurgent."[12] Therefore, a counterinsurgency policy aimed at winning over the population must either increase the costs of joining an insurgency, or make it more beneficial to not join.

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[8] Austin Long, *On "Other War:" Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2006), http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2006/RAND_MG482.pdf (accessed April, 15, 2007).

[9] Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), 44-45.

[10] Ibid., 64-65.

[11] Austin Long, *On "Other War,"* x.

[12] Ibid., 25.

For example, increasing the costs of joining an insurgency might be achieved if the odds of capture were high, and punishment was severe and enforced. Contrastingly, increasing the benefits to not join could include monetary incentives, security, or social welfare programs. Cost/benefit theorists emphasized, however, that benefits should not be offered to the population without reasonable expectation that those benefits would not reach the hands of insurgents. In other words, benefits should not be given to win the hearts and minds of the population, but provided only in exchange for cooperation from the population in the counterinsurgency effort.[13]

C. CHARACTERISTICS OF GREED-BASED INSURGENCIES

Led by Paul Collier, a series of controversial studies published by the World Bank in the 1990s proclaimed that insurgencies were motivated by access to legal and illegal lootable resources, rather than political or ideological grievances.[14] Lootable resources include commodities such as diamonds, oil, timber, or drugs. These findings were in stark contrast to the conventional wisdom left over from the Cold War that insurgent organizations were primarily grievance-based.

Collier and his colleagues at the World Bank published their findings almost ten years after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The international landscape had fundamentally shifted away from a bipolar environment. The struggles across the globe could no longer be explained by the U.S.S.R. versus the United States, or communists versus capitalists. Therefore, a shift in the understanding of insurgency motivations was developed. Collier's statistical analysis found that, "When the main grievances—inequality, political repression, and ethnic and religious divisions—are measured objectively, they provide no explanatory power in predicting rebellion. These objective grievances and hatreds simply cannot usually be the cause of violent conflict."[15] Instead,

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[13] Austin Long, *On "Other War,"* 25.

[14] Collier and Hoeffler, "On Economic Causes of Civil War," working paper (World Bank, 1998); Collier and Hoeffler, "Justice-Seeking and Loot-Seeking in Civil War," working paper (World Bank, 1999); Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," working paper (World Bank, 2001); Collier, "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and their Implications for Policy," working paper (World Bank, 2000).

[15] Collier, "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and their Implications for Policy," 21.

he argues that insurgencies were motivated by the opportunity to acquire wealth through the access to the types of lootable resources described earlier.[16]

Greed-based insurgencies can be thought of like organized crime in the United States. Their primary objective is to profit from access to the illicit economy. In contrast to grievance-based insurgencies, they are not determined to overthrow the state. Actually, greed-based insurgencies try to limit their contact with the state as much as possible. Like organized crime, greed-based insurgencies prefer to operate under the radar, attracting as little state attention to their activities as possible. Therefore, conflict usually originates from state attempts to eliminate the illegal activities of the greed-based insurgency. In these instances, the greed-based insurgency may be compelled to respond with force to protect its economic interests. Barring any intervention by the state, the greed-based insurgency is content to simply profit from their illegal activities.

The greed-based insurgency's interests in lootable resources changes the dynamics of its organization and relationship to the population. The strength of the greed-based insurgency is not derived from popular support, as it is with grievance-based insurgencies. Instead, its strength is derived from the profits earned through participation in the illicit economy. This affords them the ability to buy the food, shelter, and supplies necessary to maintain the organization. The size of the insurgency is only restrained by the ability of the leadership to maintain control of the organization, or by the ability of the state to limit its growth. The leadership does not want the organization to become so large that it loses control to entrepreneurial cadres that might be tempted to embezzle funds or strike out on their own. Nor does it want to attract undue attention from the state.

The reliance on lootable resources causes a greatly decreased reliance on the population. Greed-based insurgencies are not necessarily interested in winning over the support of the population, although they still need to recruit to assist in their chosen economic activity. Instead of recruiting by ideology, greed-based insurgencies are able to recruit from segments of society that are attracted to the organization by the prospect of

[16] Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," 2.

profiting from it. Despite their need for recruits, a greed-based insurgency may be willing to harm the population if its participation in the illegal activity required it. Unlike grievance-based insurgencies that view the state and state actors as their primary enemy, the greed-based insurgency views anyone interfering with their enterprise (including the local population) as an enemy to be dealt with harshly.

Along those lines, a greed-based insurgency will not hesitate to use force against competing organizations. As with organized crime, territory or "turf" becomes highly important because it provides access to the lootable resources. A greed-based insurgency will fiercely defend its territory from all encroachers, whether it be the state, other greed-based insurgencies, or criminal organizations. This increases the likelihood of violent conflict in countries with greed-based insurgencies. Turf battles between armed non-state actors are also likely to lead to high levels of internal displacement and decreased levels of popular support for the insurgency.

1. Strategies/Policies to Defeat Greed-based Insurgencies

The shift in the relationship with the population for greed-based insurgencies causes its center of gravity to be different than grievance-based insurgencies. A counterinsurgent strategy aimed at winning popular support would be largely ineffective because the greed-based insurgency is less reliant on the population to maintain its organization. Even if the government had one hundred percent support of the locals, the greed-based insurgency would still not be prevented from extorting local businesses, or forcing locals into service. Rather, the focal point of a greed-based insurgency is its access to lootable resources. If that access is removed, the greed-based insurgency will be significantly weakened, or disappear altogether.

Scholars have recognized the importance of economic interests for greed-based insurgencies, and recommend economic sanctions that target the finances of combatants.[17] Such sanctions could include "the suppression of money laundering, regulating the export of weapons, combating narcotics trafficking, targeting international

[17] David M. Malone and Jake Sherman, "Economic Factors in Civil Wars: Policy Considerations," in *Rethinking the Economics of War,* 241.

organized crime, and minimizing the negative impact of private-sector activities."[18] These types of initiatives must be carefully administered, examining each specific case before choosing the right combination of sanctions.[19]

Sanctions, however, have many drawbacks. Ballentine points out some of their ill-intended consequences:

> sanctions have the effect of raising the value of the targeted activity, thereby increasing the economic incentive for less scrupulous profit-seekers to engage in it. Likewise, rather than inducing combatants toward negotiated settlements, the reduction in revenues from established sources can intensify intragroup competition over spoils, while also encouraging increased predation of available civilian assets to compensate for lost revenues. In either case, there is a distinct possibility that these sorts of supply-side policies will exacerbate both criminality and conflict, at least in the short term.[20]

Along with possibly intensifying the conflict, Malone and Sherman also argue that sanctions often lack "effective implementation and enforcement on the ground, enabling open circumvention by smugglers of arms, fuel, natural resources, and other commodities."[21]

Samuel Porteous recognizes the need to strengthen enforcement of sanctions, but still sees them as "the international community's last best alternative to costly and destructive military interventions."[22]

> A thorough financial sanctions program requires only a tiny fraction of the financial resources a military deployment would…More work, however, needs to be done to establish the appropriate structures and systems necessary to establish an efficient financial sanctions enforcement mechanism acceptable to the international community.[23]

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[18] David M. Malone and Jake Sherman, "Economic Factors in Civil Wars: Policy Considerations," in *Rethinking the Economics of War,* 240.

[19] Ibid., 254.

[20] Karen Ballentine, "Beyond Greed and Grievance: Reconsidering the Economic Dynamics of Armed Conflict," in *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict,* 275.

[21] David M. Malone and Jake Sherman, "Economic Factors in Civil Wars: Policy Considerations," in *Rethinking the Economics of War,* 246.

[22] Samuel D. Porteous, "Targeted Financial Sanctions," in *Greed and Grievance,* 173.

[23] Samuel D. Porteous, "Targeted Financial Sanctions," in *Greed and Grievance,* 185.

On the other hand, I. William Zartman argues that greed-based insurgencies cannot be defeated without the use of military force.[24] Unfortunately, Zartman does not specify what tactics the military should employ.

The last policy prescription, put forth by Farer, recommends strengthening the institutions that punish criminal behavior.[25] The illegal activities of greed-based insurgencies should be targeted, and those apprehended should be brought to justice. This would require that criminal tribunals have the "means for investigating alleged crimes, compelling the accused's appearance, conducting fair trials (which is normally deemed to include a right of appeal), and executing sentences."[26]

D. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF RESOURCE-BASED INSURGENCIES

The Collier articles were important in moving the debate of insurgency motivations away from the traditional beliefs held over from the Cold War. Many scholars acknowledged that Collier's work was important for highlighting the centrality of lootable resources to modern insurgencies, but few were ready to agree wholeheartedly that insurgent organizations were motivated solely by greed. Most insurgency scholars argue that modern insurgencies are still grievance-driven, but acknowledge that greed has altered some of the motivations and characteristics of insurgencies that have gained access to lootable resources.[27] In fact, even Collier moved away from his position that greed was the sole motivator for insurgencies when he acknowledged that grievance factors added some "explanatory power" to his model.[28]

This debate over the exact motivations of modern insurgencies is ongoing, and difficult to resolve without the ability to read the minds of insurgents around the world.

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[24] I. William Zartman, "Need, Creed, and Greed in Intrastate Conflict," in *Rethinking the Economics of War,* 283.

[25] Tom Farer, "Shaping Agendas in Civil Wars: Can International Criminal Law Help?" in *Greed and Grievance,* 206.

[26] Ibid., 219.

[27] Arnson and Zartman, ed., *Rethinking the Economics of War: The Intersection of Need, Creed, and Greed*; Ballentine and Sherman, ed., *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance*; Berdal and Malone, ed., *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil War*.

[28] Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," 16.

It is safe to say that many modern insurgent organizations retain a mixture of greed and grievance motivations. After all, insurgencies need some source of funding to maintain their movement. If insurgencies are able to profit from the illicit economy, they can rely less on popular support for funding. However, the act of establishing economic enterprises only adds to, but does not replace, the grievance motivations of the insurgency.

It is important to understand the implications of the mixed political, ideological, and economic objectives of resource-based insurgencies. They may still ultimately wish to overthrow the government, but failing that, they maintain an interest in their economic activities and therefore have less reason to negotiate for peace. As Arnson points out, "civil wars previously defined as political rebellions (to which the state responds through counterinsurgency) need to be understood in terms of the interest of rebels, warlords, or armed gangs who benefit from violent economic activity and therefore have incentives to prolong conflict as well as sabotage peacemaking efforts."[29] Also, Ballentine argues that insurgencies' interests in maintaining access to lootable resources may generate new grievances, especially if that access is restricted or denied. These new grievances add to the already existing grievances, providing more cause for hostilities and lengthening the conflict.[30]

The mixed objectives of a resource-based insurgency are beneficial to its size and strength, yet potentially detrimental to its cohesion. A resource-based insurgency benefits because it can recruit similar to a grievance- *or* a greed-based insurgency. It can attract recruits through its ideology, or by appealing to poor peasants attracted by the possibility of profiting from the insurgency's economic enterprises. This increased recruitment pool allows a resource-based insurgency to grow rapidly, if the need arises. Also, the strength of the insurgency increases because it has a dual resource base, popular support and profits from its illicit activities.

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[29] Cynthia Arnson, "The Political Economy of War: Situating the Debate," in *Rethinking the Economics of War,* 8.

[30] Karen Ballentine, "Beyond Greed and Grievance: Reconsidering the Economic Dynamics of Armed Conflict," in *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict,* 267-268.

The dual resource base, however, forces the insurgency to perform a delicate balancing act to maintain internal cohesion. The resource-based insurgency must indoctrinate all its new recruits, who now demonstrate a mixture of motivations—those that joined for the ideological cause, and those that joined for the economic cause. As Ballentine points out:

> increased combatant access to economic capital may have worked to undermine their acquired social capital, both by enabling quicker rates of recruitment, which may strain a combatant group's ability to socialize new recruits to the group's ideological cause, and by attracting recruits for whom the prospect of financial benefit is more important than ideological conviction or political aims.[31]

These mixed motivations can potentially create an internal schism if the leadership is not able to indoctrinate new recruits effectively or efficiently.

Also, as wealth is amassed from the sale of lootable resources, the resource-based insurgency may become less reliant on popular support. As reliance on popular support decreases, the resource-based insurgency may resort to threat or forcible coercion as a means to recruit. [32] Coerced recruitment presents another leadership challenge because it increases the need for strict discipline among the ranks. Recruits that are forced into service may attempt to escape, or worse, undermine the movement. Discipline must remain high to avoid such problems. Therefore, the ability to rapidly increase in size through recruitment (voluntary or coerced) may prove detrimental to the internal cohesion of the organization.

The dual resource base also presents difficulties when the insurgency is challenged by other armed actors. Protecting access to lootable resources often becomes a prime objective, forcing the resource-based insurgency to behave similar to a greed-based insurgency, i.e., any threats to access of lootable resources are dealt with harshly. Often the fight over resources comes at the expense of the population, as innocent non-combatants are caught in the cross-fire. This inevitably causes the popular support for

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[31] Karen Ballentine, "Beyond Greed and Grievance: Reconsidering the Economic Dynamics of Armed Conflict," in *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict*, 270.

[32] Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman, introduction to *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance*, 8.

the insurgency to wane. Once this occurs, the resource-based insurgency becomes increasingly like a greed-based insurgency, using coercion to recruit.

A resource-based insurgency is less likely to join forces with an insurgency that shares similar ideological convictions, if the union would require sharing profits from the illicit economy. In fact, resource-based insurgencies with a tremendous economic base might feel less of a need to look for outside assistance if they have enough money to provide for their soldiers. Joining forces with another organization would only force them to share their profits and share power after their expected victory over the state. In this regard, resource-based insurgencies are also less susceptible to international influences. Unlike grievance-based insurgencies of the Cold War period, resource-based insurgencies are more resistant to external support because it is not as necessary as it was in the past.

1. Strategies/Policies to Defeat Resource-based Insurgencies

Once again, the center of gravity has shifted for this third type of insurgency. Resource-based insurgencies share characteristics with both grievance- and greed-based insurgencies. As with grievance-based insurgencies, a critical objective for resource-based insurgencies is overthrowing the government, or having the government capitulate to certain grievances. Increasing the size and strength of the insurgency is necessary to achieve this objective. Resource-based insurgencies achieve this two ways—by enlisting the support of the population, and by amassing wealth through the sale of lootable resources. The reliance on lootable resources causes the resource-based insurgency to share some characteristics with greed-based insurgencies, namely its relationship to the population and other armed actors.

The recognition of the shared characteristics of a resource-based insurgency might lead to the misguided approach of combining existing grievance- and greed-based COIN strategies. That is, a strategy that combined gaining popular support (either HAM or cost/benefit) with targeting illicit funding sources (economic sanctions or strengthened criminal institutions). This approach would be flawed since there exists one means of deterring both sources of insurgent strength—establishing state control of territory.

If done correctly, state control of territory accomplishes two goals simultaneously: (1) it reduces insurgent access to the population, (2) it reduces insurgent access to lootable resources. The center of gravity for resource-based insurgencies, therefore, is not popular support, nor the source of funding, but access to territory not controlled by the state.

At this point, it is important to define the "control of territory." An actor, either state or non-state, can be said to control an area when it has a monopoly on the use of force for that region. In most advanced countries, it is taken for granted that the state has the monopoly on the use of force. The state has law enforcement agencies or a military to maintain control. This is predicated on an established rule of law that is commonly accepted, or at least understood, by the population. Consequently, if a law is broken, it is expected that the state will attempt to bring the criminal to justice; or, if violence breaks out in a region, the state will use necessary force to restore order.

In countries with insurgencies, the monopoly on the use of force is contested, thus control of territory is contested. A grievance-based insurgency ultimately wishes to replace the state's monopoly on the use of force throughout the country. A greed-based insurgency contests the state's use of force to restrict the insurgency's illegal economic activities. A resource-based insurgency shares both of these objectives. It desires to overthrow the state and, thus, needs to recruit an "army" of its own. It also need to protect its source of funding used to equip, train, feed, and clothe its "army."

How a counterinsurgency policy attacks this center of gravity (territory) is critical. The counterinsurgent must remember that challenging a resource-based insurgency's access to lootable resources will cause it to behave like a greed-based insurgency. If forced, it may be willing to eschew popular support in exchange for access to the illicit economy, knowing that it has the power to coerce recruits as needed. Likewise, a COIN campaign aimed solely at gaining control of the population will also force the insurgency to become more reliant on its alternate resource base, the illicit economy, resulting in a similar outcome. This seemingly makes winning over the population by the counterinsurgent a less important objective.

On the other hand, if the counterinsurgent were successful at eliminating the insurgency's access to the illicit economy, the insurgency would be forced to resort to popular support as its primary source of funding. Also, efforts to take control of territory will invariably require the support of the people living in those areas. A state that ignores this requirement will meet greater resistance and possibly push non-combatants to the side of the insurgency. Therefore, the population cannot be ignored by the counterinsurgent. A strategy aimed at controlling the territory must also include a campaign to gain the support of the population, which would include either a HAM or cost/benefit approach.

By controlling the territory, the state has the means available to better implement either a cost/benefit or a HAM strategy. For example, a non-combatant might be less tempted to join an insurgency if he had a high expectation of capture due to an increased state presence in his town, or the state offered better incentives to not join. Similarly, state control of territory reduces a non-combatant's probability of being coerced into joining an insurgency by providing security to the region. Also, strengthening criminal institutions and enforcing economic sanctions will become easier with greater control of territory by the state. These policies are largely toothless in areas without state presence.

That said, there are limits to using a popular support strategy. Remember, the purpose of gaining popular support is to encourage non-combatants to side with the government (as opposed to the secondary goal of winning back those that have already joined an insurgency). The objective is to contain the size and strength of the insurgency so that it can then be defeated militarily or forced to the negotiating table. Therefore, a COIN strategy aimed at winning popular support will only be effective in areas populated by non-combatants. In the case of resource-based insurgencies, some, or all, parts of their organization are based around territories where their lootable resources are located. In these areas, they have may have already consolidated their power, either by recruiting the local population, or evicting or killing dissidents. A COIN strategy aimed at controlling the population would be largely ineffective in these regions.

So, a COIN strategy aimed at the control of territory, with special consideration given to simultaneously winning over the population, would achieve the desired outcome.

Regaining control of territory used by a resource-based insurgency to access lootable resources would cut off a major source of funding for the insurgency. At the same time, as territory, and the population in it, are controlled by the state, the resource-based insurgency loses its second source of funding.

As the state increases control of the territory (along with control of the population), the insurgency will be left with no other option than to move into more remote regions of the country where the state has not yet exerted control. These remote regions may still provide access to lootable resources, but access to markets becomes increasingly difficult. If the state is unable to retake the region due to terrain or other impediments, it can consolidate control around those regions, thereby isolating the insurgency. Also, these remote regions are likely to be less inhabited, providing a smaller recruitment pool to the insurgency. This slow, but steady reduction in access to lootable resources and the population will eventually be enough to force the resource-based insurgency to negotiate or disband.

E. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the recognition of insurgency motivations has broadened since the research conducted by the World Bank. The increased awareness of the economic motivations of insurgencies has led to a new set of counterinsurgency policy recommendations focused on targeting assets and economic sanctions. This differs from the recommendations to target the population that emerged during the Cold War to combat ideological insurgencies. Unfortunately, determining the motivations of an insurgency can be a difficult task, as some insurgencies appear to have both ideological and economic motivations. In these cases, the policymaker is helpless in determining the correct COIN strategy to adopt, as all options available will lead to failure. This chapter has analyzed the characteristics of the two established types of insurgency—grievance-based and greed-based—and the strategies and policies recommended to defeat them. A third type of insurgency—resource-based—was introduced, its characteristics analyzed, and a course of action suggested that differs slightly from those already recommended.

A resource-based insurgency derives a large portion of its strength from its access to lootable resources which are sold for profit. These economic interests expand the recruiting pool for the insurgency, increasing the size and strength of the organization. It also allows the insurgency to buy food, supplies, and weapons. These economic interests, however, can potentially alter a resource-based insurgency's relationship to the population and relationship to other armed actors.

These characteristics highlight the potential problems of using existing COIN strategies to combat resource-based insurgencies. Instead, a COIN strategy for resource-based insurgencies should focus first on controlling territory that provides the insurgency access to the lootable resources, while simultaneously controlling the population within that territory. This is a task that can only be accomplished by utilizing military and police forces. The wealth available to resource-based insurgencies enables them to stockpile arsenals capable of defeating many of the militaries they face. The battle will inevitably be a bloody one.

III. HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE FARC AND COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

A. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided the framework for analysis when looking at an insurgency. It made the case for examining the characteristics of an insurgency to determine an effective counterinsurgency policy. This chapter will apply that framework to the FARC, arguably Colombia's most dangerous insurgency. It will follow the FARC's transition from a communist-based campesino organization to a major trafficker in cocaine and heroin. This transition has led to great debate about the FARC's current motivations. Do they still maintain their ideological roots and wish to replace the government? Or, has the quest for profits from narcotrafficking superseded their political objectives?

To begin, a brief history of the FARC is presented to give the reader the necessary background on the insurgency. Next, Colombia's historical response to the FARC will be analyzed, attempting to show why Colombia has lacked the ability to respond to the threat within its borders. Once the background is set, the FARC's characteristics will be analyzed, with careful consideration given to changes in those characteristics over time. The conclusion is that there have been significant changes in four of the five characteristics, with only the FARC's political/ideological objectives remaining constant. These current characteristics show that the FARC is a resource-based insurgency, and that territory is its centers of gravity.

B. FARC BACKGROUND

The FARC has been the primary insurgent faction in Colombia since its inception in 1966. The FARC emerged from a bloody and tumultuous period in Colombian history known as *La Violencia*. During this period, 1948-1964, the two primary political parties in Colombia, the Liberals and Conservatives, mobilized against each other "in an

undeclared civil war that claimed over 200,000 lives."[33] While the Liberals and Conservatives massacred each other in horrendous fashion, members of the Colombian Communist party organized peasants into 'self-defense' groups to defend themselves and their property.[34] These 'self-defense' groups were the precursor to the FARC.

La Violencia ended with the formation of the National Front, an agreement between the Liberals and Conservatives to alternate control of the government. No longer fighting against each other, the Liberals and Conservatives refocused their energies on eliminating other political threats, including the Communist party. In 1964, the Colombian military took action against five Communist municipalities in the Tolima province, located 140 miles southwest of Bogotá. The Colombian government considered the offensive a military success as the Communist enclaves were destroyed. However, the majority of the communists were neither killed nor captured, and they would later rejoin to form the FARC.[35]

Originally, the FARC maintained its connection to the Communist Party. They adopted the Colombian Communist Party's slogan of *la combinacion de todas las formas de lucha,* or "the combination of all forms of struggle." The strategy of the mantra was simple: to "use all the tools…at their disposal to fight off and eventually topple the government."[36] However, the rebels soon became the leaders of the organization and the Communist Party began to lose control.[37] Even as the FARC superseded the Communist Party and became its own institution, it did not desert its original political and ideological goals. The FARC maintained its vision of replacing the government with "some form of socialist system in Colombia."[38]

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[33] Angel Rabasa and Peter Chalk, *Colombian Labyrinth: The Synergy of Drugs and Insurgency and its Implications for Regional Stability* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 23.

[34] Steven Dudley, *Walking Ghosts: Murder and Guerrilla Politics in Colombia* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 7

[35] Ibid., 10.

[36] Ibid., 8.

[37] Ibid., 10.

[38] Peceny and Durnan, "The FARC's Best Friend," 100.

From its inception through the early 1980s, the FARC maintained a rather small presence in the countryside. "In its early stages, FARC guerrillas engaged in ambushes of military units and raids on farms. The main objectives were capturing military equipment, securing food and supplies, capturing hostages, and settling scores with informers."[39] The FARC was far from ready to engage in large operations aimed at the overthrow of the government. In fact, the FARC "was more concerned with survival in the face of a determined effort by the Colombian army to eliminate it."[40]

During this time the FARC also began to organize into a military-like structure, wearing uniforms and insignia, and developing "fronts" in departments (states) throughout Colombia. One of the outcomes of the FARC's Seventh Conference in 1982 was an expansion strategy, with the goal of establishing a front in every Colombian department.[41] A front consists of "combat, support, and infrastructure elements."[42] The combat units are the core of the front, made up of two or more companies, consisting of 50-55 fighters each.[43] Supporting elements of the front include finance, logistics, intelligence, public order, and mass work commissions.[44]

Throughout its existence, two of the primary tactics employed by the FARC have been kidnapping and extortion. These activities serve dual purposes. They perpetuate insecurity and instability, creating a burden on the state to halt such activities. They also serve as a form of revenue for the FARC allowing them to buy weapons to commit further violent acts against the state. By the 1980s the FARC became involved in another activity that served these dual purposes, but has been much more lucrative—illegal drug trafficking.

The early 1980s witnessed a shift from marijuana to more lucrative coca plantations in Colombia, injecting an enormous source of illicit money into the economy.

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[39] Rabasa and Chalk, *Colombian Labyrinth*, 24.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., 24-25.

[42] Ibid., 25.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

Drug traffickers, eager to cash in, began moving into FARC-controlled regions of Colombia to set up shop. At first, the FARC were able to profit from the drug trade by taxing coca farmers in exchange for protection from narco-traffickers. Realizing the profits to be made, the FARC began to tax the narcotraffickers as well. "Progressively, however, the group levied new tariffs on other illegal transactions, from importing precursor agents to refining cocaine. They also demanded rents from the *narcos* for coca paste, protection of labs, and the provision of airstrips."[45]

Small-time traffickers, however, soon grew into huge cartels with enough money to fund paramilitaries to protect their interests from the FARC. State-sponsored paramilitaries also arose in the 1980s. Bloody battles over territory have ensued ever since. The FARC has become increasingly involved in the drug trade in the areas they have maintained control. To understand the relationship of the FARC to the drug trade it is important to understand the links of the chain. The International Crisis Group describes it best:

> From bottom to top, the drug trade involves the following stages: cultivation; harvest; production of first coca paste and then coca base by the farmers in primitive, make-shift facilities and *cocinas*; storage and sale of coca base; refinement into cocaine (in more complex laboratories or *cristalizaderos*); transport to transshipment points; transport abroad to intermediary points such as Mexico or to final destinations, such as the U.S. or Europe; sale in large quantities; sale in small quantities to consumers; consumption.[46]

The ICG reports that the FARC completely controls the drug chain from cultivation through refinement in the departments of Caqueta, Guaviare, and parts of Putumayo, Narino, and Catatumbo.[47]

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[45] Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Shooting Up: The Drug Trade and Military Conflict," (paper presented at the annual meeting for American Political Science Association, 2005), 17.

[46] International Crisis Group, "War and Drugs in Colombia," *Latin America Report* no. 11 (January 2005): 8.

[47] International Crisis Group, "War and Drugs in Colombia," 10.

C. COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The FARC arose out of a bloody and tumultuous period in Colombian history. While the FARC has never been accepted as a legitimate organization, the Colombian government has tried multiple tactics to deal with the insurgent organization—from hard-line to conciliatory, and back again. There are various reasons for the ineffectiveness of the Colombian government to eliminate the FARC from its borders. The geography of the country, state fear of a strong military, the allowance of legalized paramilitaries, the lack of long-term COIN strategy, the decentralization of state power, and the explosion of the cocaine industry all have contributed to Colombia's failure.

The geography of Colombia is so diverse that it presents multiple difficulties for the state to establish its presence. There is the coastal zone along the Caribbean Sea and another coastal zone along the Pacific Ocean. There are three large mountain ranges that run through the country, creating barriers to the valleys between. The easternmost range is the Sumapaz Mountains, beyond which lies the Eastern Plains, making up nearly one-third of the country. Each of these areas are diverse ecosystems with different economic bases, and are largely independent from the other regions. These geographical barriers have prevented the state from integrating the different regions of the country. As Vargas points out, "geography conspired to inhibit integration by making transportation between regions—particularly between the capital, located on the isolated high plateau of the central cordillera, and other departments—extremely difficult."[48] The weak presence of the state in many of its territories has led to power vacuums in those municipalities that have been filled by insurgents and/or paramilitaries.[49]

Another shortcoming was the Colombian resistance to fund a larger, stronger military ensuring the state maintained a monopoly on the use of force. It was the fear of a military coup, an occurrence happening altogether too frequently in Latin America, which led the Colombian government to limit military funding. As Dudley points out,

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[48] Ricardo Vargas, "State, Esprit Mafioso, and Armed Conflict in Colombia," in *Politics in the Andes: Identity,Conflict, Reform*, ed. Jo-Marie Burt and Philip Mauceri (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004), 109.

[49] Ibid.

"Fearful of the growing presence of the military in other Latin American countries, Colombian politicians deliberately kept their own armed forces just big enough to keep the guerrillas in check, but not big enough to threaten their hold on the government."[50]

Lack of state strength, presence, and military weakness also contributed to the rise of the paramilitaries to combat the FARC. Legal paramilitaries were created under Colombian Army General Fernando Landazabal in the early 1980s. Frustrated by the state's unwillingness to allow the army to fight insurgency as he saw fit, Landazabal took advantage of a 1968 Colombian law that authorized citizens to organize into militias.[51] Soon military officers were organizing with local business owners to form "self-defense" groups, determined to eliminate subversives from their hometowns.[52] State acquiescence to "legalized" paramilitaries also contributed to the rise of paramilitaries funded by narcotraffickers to protect their interests from the FARC. The willingness of the state to relinquish power to these paramilitaries factionalized the country. This strategy may have been effective in the short term, but only led to the state's delegitimization in the long term.[53]

Since 1968, the Colombian government has wavered in its stance on the legality of paramilitaries. This can be attributed to the inconsistency of the National Front and its long-lasting effects on civil-military relations. External competition was eliminated under the National Front, but internal competition was also limited. The "out" party felt little need to compete and compromise with the "in" party, knowing that their turn in power was coming soon enough. This prevented a long-term, unified approach for dealing with insurgencies from ever being adopted.

Inconsistency continued after the National Front ended, partly attributable to the constitutional restriction on presidential reelection. Until 2006, Colombian presidents were allowed to serve only one four-year term in office. Every four years a new president took office and promoted a new strategy for dealing with the FARC. Efforts to

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[50] Dudley, *Walking Ghosts,* 37.

[51] Dudley, *Walking Ghosts,* 41.

[52] Ibid., 42.

[53] Vargas, "State, Esprit Mafioso, and Armed Conflict in Colombia," in *Politics in the Andes*, 123-124.

negotiate with the FARC under Betancur (1982-86) and Pastrana (1998-2002) have only resulted in the rebuilding and strengthening of the FARC. These efforts have failed because the Colombian government was not bargaining from a position of power.

The Colombian government also made the mistake of instituting reforms in the 1980s and 1990s that decentralized national power to the subnational level. As Eaton argues, these reforms only provided guerrillas further means to destabilize the state, due in large part to the weakness of police presence in much of the country.[54] Insurgents abused the reforms to further entrench themselves inside the legitimate political system by winning local elections and gaining access to municipal revenues:

> [T]he FARC leadership moved to increase its influence and control over local municipal governments in the areas where it has a strong military presence. This strategy was implemented after 1988, when Colombians began to directly elect their mayors, and later, in 1991, when the central budget was decentralized and municipalities for the first time had substantial resources.[55]

Again, the root of the failed reforms was the absence of the state's monopoly on the use of force. "Decentralization worsened rather than improved the security situation in Colombia because the central government failed to provide one of the few governmental functions—public order—that was *not* decentralized."[56]

Lastly, the Colombian government has suffered, and the FARC benefited, from the illicit drug economy. The increasing involvement of the FARC in drug trafficking since the 1980s has increased their wealth enormously, allowing them to build up huge arsenals. Colombian government efforts, aided largely by the United States, to reduce

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[54] Kent Eaton, "Armed Clientelism in Colombia's Civil War: The Negative Impact of Decentralization on Security,"(working paper, Department of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2005), 1.

[55] Marc Chernick, "Economic Resources and Internal Armed Conflicts: Lessons from the Colombian Case," in *Rethinking the Economics of War*, 200.

[56] Eaton, "Armed Clientelism in Colombia's Civil War," 19.

significantly the total amount of coca cultivated have been unsuccessful. Reports of FARC annual revenue from drug trafficking are conflicting.

> The United Nations estimates that the FARC's average annual income is $342 million of which $204 million comes from the drug trade. However, the Colombian Finance Ministry reports FARC revenue in 2003 at $77.16 million, of which drug trafficking accounted for $11.54 million.[57]

Regardless of the actual amount, the FARC clearly continues to benefit from its activities in the drug trade.

In summary, Colombia has been unable to effectively respond to the FARC threat for a variety of reasons, some within its control and some not. There is little the Colombian government can do to change the geography of the country. Drug traffickers and the FARC have been able to benefit from the drug industry under cover of this rugged and diverse terrain. However, the Colombian government did have control over the unwillingness to fund a larger military, the inconsistent COIN strategies, and the decision to decentralize. Hindsight is 20/20, and history cannot be changed, but it can be learned from. The next section will compare the history of the FARC with the current situation to highlight the necessary COIN strategy needed to defeat the FARC once and for all.

D. EVOLUTION OF THE FARC

In the beginning, the FARC displayed the characteristics of a grievance-based insurgency. It was an ideological-based organization with the clear political objective of removing the government from power and replacing it with a socialist agenda. It began as a relatively small movement that depended largely on a non-combative relationship with the population in order to recruit supporters. Strength was also derived from the FARC's ability to fund the organization through means other than popular support, to include kidnapping and extortion. The early FARC maintained a fairly neutral position

against other non-state armed actors such as the ELN and M-19, neither developing an openly friendly nor hostile relationship. The primary enemy of the FARC was the GOC and Colombian Army (COLAR).

Clearly, the FARC's relationship to the illicit economy has been the most dramatic characteristic shift since the FARC began trafficking drugs in the 1980s. The FARC's decision to participate in the drug trade has altered three of its remaining characteristics—its size and strength, relationship to the population, and relationship to other armed actors. These characteristics have changed in varying degrees, and at different times. The one FARC characteristic that seems to remain unchanged is the organization's political/ideological objectives.

Participation in drug trafficking required FARC access to territory to cultivate, harvest, process, and export narcotics. The FARC established a dominant presence in many uncontrolled regions of Colombia, allowing it to profit extensively from the drug trade. These profits have clearly allowed the FARC to grow in size and strength. It took twenty years, from 1966 to 1986, for the FARC to grow from 350 fighters to 3600, but only another nine years to grow to 7000 (1995), and another five to max out between 15,000-20,000 (2000).[58] Chernick further points out that, "In the Colombian case, there appears to be a clear and direct correlation between the advent of new and abundant sources of financing and the territorial expansion and increased intensity of the war."[59]

The FARC managed to grow rapidly in size mostly by coercing recruits, including children, from poor, remote regions of the country.[60] Young, poorly educated recruits present a unique challenge to the FARC's cohesion because they must be indoctrinated with the FARC's ideological beliefs. Evidence suggests that high OPTEMPO, at least in

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[57] Connie Veillette, "Plan Colombia: A Progress Report," *Congressional Research Service* (May 2005): 8-9.

[58] Rabasa and Chalk, *Colombian Labyrinth*, 26-27.

[59] Chernick, "Economic Resources and Internal Armed Conflicts: Lessons from the Colombian Case," in *Rethinking the Economics of War*, 179.

[60] Paul Saskiewicz, "The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP): Marxist-Leninist Insurgency or Criminal Enterprise?" (Master's Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, December 2005), 94.

the 1990s, has led to a decline in indoctrination efforts by the FARC.[61] In the long term, the failure to indoctrinate new recruits may weaken the organization, because they remain a potential source of internal strife to the organization.

The willingness to forcefully coerce recruits has contributed to the decline in the FARC's popular support, along with other factors. In the beginning, the FARC maintained a cordial relationship with the population by "protecting" peasant growers from narcotraffickers. The FARC fostered this relationship by using drug money to provide social services to the rural poor.

> [T]he FARC has used the drug money to establish local clinics and organize public works, such as construction of infrastructure and provision of means of transportation. Indeed, in many municipalities, the FARC has been the sole provider of essential public services.[62]

These efforts at goodwill certainly made the FARC attractive to peasants in areas with little or no contact with the state, thus increasing their recruiting abilities.

The FARC's relationship to the population evolved as the FARC was increasingly challenged by the GOC and AUC. The GOC has always recognized the FARC as the primary security threat in Colombia; however, the U.S.-led "war on drugs" encouraged the GOC to treat the FARC as narcotraffickers, limiting its effectiveness as a COIN force. This left room for the AUC to act as the primary COIN force in many regions of Colombia. The AUC's existence has been controversial, to say the least, considering its own involvement in drug trafficking. Battles between the FARC and AUC have been notoriously bloody, often at the expense of peasant non-combatants caught in the cross-fire.

The challenge by the AUC and the GOC forced the FARC into an untenable position. In essence, the FARC was forced to choose between maintaining popular support among the peasants or protecting access to territory and the drug trade. A look at the suspected massacres perpetrated by the FARC since 1997 indicates that the FARC

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[61] Paul Saskiewicz, "The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP): Marxist-Leninist Insurgency or Criminal Enterprise?" (Master's Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, December 2005), 95.

[62] Felbab-Brown, "Shooting Up: The Drug Trade and Military Conflict," 14.

has largely forsaken popular support in lieu of maintaining access to coca growing regions. While the FARC has never engaged in massacres to the extent the AUC has, data gathered by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch shows an increase in FARC violence coincidental with the AUC offensive beginning in 1997.[63]

Overall, FARC massacres peaked in 2001, but the International Crisis Group notes two key incidents in 2002 that further contributed to the decline of the FARC's popular support:

> Brutal 'mistakes' like the killing of 119 innocent people in the church of Bellavista (Bojayá, Chocó) in May 2002 in a battle with paramilitaries and the launching of home-made rockets against the Presidential Palace during Uribe's inauguration on 7 August 2002, which missed but killed 26 beggars, have had negative repercussions.[64]

As the ICG notes, "Sympathy or support has given way in many places to a fear-based relationship."[65] The increasingly hostile relationship with the population and subsequent decline in popular support has had a limited effect on FARC size and strength. The FARC's access to territory eliminated the need of the insurgency to seek shelter among the population; and wealth from drug trafficking allowed the FARC to buy required food, supplies, and weapons.

The one characteristic that seems to remain unchanged is the FARC's political/ideological objectives. A memoranda dated 15 October 2001 posted on the FARC's website documents the FARC's grievances with the government.[66] A few of these grievances include agrarian reform, ending the criminalization of the right to protest, punishing corrupt officials, and ending the spraying of coca fields. Marc Chernick notes that the FARC is also demanding "institutional guarantees for political

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[63] Andrés Ballesteros and others, "The Work of International and Human Rights Watch: Evidence from Colombia," working paper #4 (Conflict Analysis Resource Center, 2007), http://www.cerac.org.co/home_english.htm (accessed April 15, 2007).

[64] International Crisis Group, "War and Drugs in Colombia," 13.

[65] International Crisis Group, "War and Drugs in Colombia," 12.

[66] Raúl Reyes and others, "Memorando al gobierno nacional sobre la Paz y el futuro de Colombia," FARC-EP official website, http://www.farcep.org/?node=2,1724,1 (accessed April 15, 2007).

participation that ensures their role in local, regional, and national governance."[67] The FARC claims that a peace settlement will not be reached until the government addresses these grievances. The fact that this document is almost six years old should not be misinterpreted to indicate the FARC's ideological convictions have waned. From the policymaker perspective, it should be assumed that the FARC's position remains unchanged, and the FARC will continue to fight until their grievances are adequately addressed by the government.

There are other indicators that the FARC still maintains its political/ideological convictions. The FARC has continued to conduct offensive attacks against the government. They conducted a major offensive in 1997, attacking multiple Colombian military bases. Also, there were attacks on the Presidential Palace during the inauguration of President Uribe in 2002. These are two examples of attacks more characteristic of a grievance-based organization. If the FARC were only interested in drug trafficking, they would act more like a greed-based insurgency, and limit themselves to only defensive violence against the state.

Additionally, if the FARC were solely interested in the profits of the drug trade, one would expect to see it use the money for personal enrichment. However the opposite is true:

> The FARC uses its drug profits, which are centrally controlled by its secretariat, not for the private enrichment of commanders but for the organization. Few if any local commanders in coca-dominated southern FARC territories display wealth (although a cult of expensive guns is visible). Since some fronts became increasingly linked to the coca trade and richer than others in the beginning of the 1990s, the FARC started to rotate commanders in order to prevent them getting used to better living conditions and avoid envy from the poorer fronts.[68]

These actions demonstrate that the FARC places organizational objectives ahead of personal gain.

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[67] Chernick, "Economic Resources and Internal Armed Conflicts: Lessons from the Colombian Case," in *Rethinking the Economics of War*, 201.

[68] International Crisis Group, "War and Drugs in Colombia," 12.

E. CONCLUSION

In sum, an examination of the evolution of the FARC demonstrates that the organization has morphed from a grievance-based insurgency to a resource-based insurgency. The FARC's 1982 decision to participate in drug trafficking to provide another source of income eventually altered many of the characteristics of the FARC. Evidence suggests that the FARC still maintains many of the original grievances with the Colombian government. Yet, participation in the illicit economy has possibly generated new grievances, specifically uninhibited access to lootable resources. That is not to say that profiting from the drug trade has become the FARC's sole reason for being. As Marc Chernick points out, "resources *are always* a decisive factor in any sustained armed struggle" but "resources are *a* factor; they are not *the* factor."[69]

The FARC's involvement in narcotrafficking (its relationship to the illicit economy) has had repercussions for the organization. Evidence shows that the FARC has been able to grow in size and strength, but that internal cohesion and popular support may have suffered due to the practice of coercing recruits. Popular support has also declined due to increased FARC maltreatment of the population in response to the strengthened challenges from the GOC and AUC. The FARC has largely forsaken popular support in exchange for protecting access to territory that provides income through narcotrafficking, and safe haven from COIN forces.

A study of the changes in FARC characteristics reveals, not only that the FARC is a resource-based insurgency, but also that territory is its center of gravity. Access to territory has allowed the FARC to grow in size and strength, and has also lessened the FARC's reliance on popular support. Had the insurgency not been challenged by the GOC and AUC, the FARC may have continued to seek support among the population. In essence, Colombian COIN forces, especially after 1997, forced the FARC to choose between the population and access to territory. This highlighted the FARC's true center

[69] Chernick, "Economic Resources and Internal Armed Conflicts: Lessons from the Colombian Case," in *Rethinking the Economics of War*, 182.

of gravity. The FARC has demonstrated that it can continue without popular support. Without access to territory, however, the FARC loses its source of strength, both militarily and economically.

Access to territory has given the FARC the advantage in the operational factors of battlespace and time.[70] Access to territory allowed the FARC to participate in drug trafficking. It has also provided the FARC with safe havens, allowing it to organize, strengthen, and conduct operations. The fact that the FARC can exist with little threat from the state allows them to prolong the conflict indefinitely. This allows the FARC to be patient, plan carefully, and conduct attacks with high probabilities of success. It would be a mistake to interpret the infrequency of FARC attacks as evidence that economic motivations have surpassed political motivations for the FARC, or that the organization has weakened to the point of collapse. As Alexandra Guaqueta notes, "The apparent logic of their current behavior is that the longer they wait, the stronger they will be militarily and the better will be their bargaining position and ability to secure concessions from the government in future negotiations."[71]

The conclusion that the FARC is a resource-based insurgency with territory as its center of gravity has tremendous implications for potential U.S. and GOC strategies to combat the FARC. These issues will be raised in the next chapter.

[70] For a further discussion of the operational factors of time, space, and force in war, see Milan N. Vego, *Operational Warfare*, (United States Naval War College, 2000), 29-95.

[71] Alexandra Guaqueta, "The Colombian Conflict: Political and Economic Dimensions," in *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict*, 96.

IV. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMPARISONS TO CURRENT POLICY

A. INTRODUCTION

The previous examination of the FARC's characteristics led to the conclusion that the FARC can be categorized as a resource-based insurgency with territory as its center of gravity. This determination is critical for policymakers to develop a proper counterinsurgency strategy to defeat the FARC militarily or through negotiation. From a U.S. policymaker perspective, the FARC has only recently received greater recognition as a U.S. security threat. The events of 9/11 caused Washington to reassess the FARC's position in the "global war on terror." The GOC, on the other hand, has always recognized the FARC as a threat to its national security. The availability of U.S. foreign aid for use in "counterterror" operations has provided Bogotá the freedom to pursue an aggressive strategy to defeat the FARC.

This chapter suggests how a counterterror policy aimed at controlling territory would affect the FARC's ability to operate. Next, it offers suggestion on how to control territory, giving specific attention to the roles of the military and police. Finally, current U.S. and Colombian policy are compared to the policy proposed here to give an indication where improvements can be made.

B. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

An effective counterinsurgency strategy in Colombia must make control of territory central to its plan. State control of territory accomplishes the tasks of limiting the FARC's illegal drug trafficking activities, reducing or eliminating FARC safe havens, and providing security to those living in fear of FARC oppression. A GOC strategy aimed at controlling all the territory in Colombia, that is, establishing a monopoly on the use of force in all regions of the country, would have several repercussions for the FARC.

First, state control of territory reduces the FARC's advantage in space, which provides access to the drug trade and safe havens. Cocaine and heroin are lootable

resources that require land to grow coca and poppy. The rugged terrain of Colombia makes the control of all territory extremely difficult, thus pockets of uncontrollable areas would likely remain in the hands of narcotraffickers. By controlling as much territory around these areas as possible, however, the key supply routes necessary to import precursors and export product could be cut off. Any restriction on access to territory would reduce funding through the drug trade, forcing the FARC to resort to other tactics.

Once its most lucrative source of funding was reduced or eliminated, the FARC would be expected to increase extortions and kidnappings to make up for the slack. However, as state control of territory increases, the opportunities for extortion and kidnapping will eventually decline, as well. The FARC will be less able to extort money from citizens and businesses that will have increasing protection from state presence. Also, kidnappings will be more difficult to perpetrate because the FARC will have reduced safe havens to hide kidnap victims. Considering the likely inability of the state to control all of its territory due to the rugged terrain, kidnappings would most likely remain as the FARC's primary method of funding until the end.

Increased state presence would provide security to non-combatants, as well as those that were coerced into joining the FARC. As indicated, these recruits may not have been properly indoctrinated into the organization, and therefore have no incentive to stay and fight. State guarantees of security may provide the opportunity for non-ideological members to lay down their weapons and reintegrate into society, thus weakening the organization.

As the FARC's advantage in space shrinks, so does their advantage of time. No longer will the terms of battle be set by the FARC. Eventually, assuming a long-term and consistent GOC strategy of gaining control of territory, the FARC will have two options. The FARC will be forced into engagement to protect its access to territory, or it will have to disperse among the population. Open engagement favors the Colombian government, which retains the advantage in the operation factor of force, despite the FARC's large arsenal.

If the FARC opts to disperse among the population, the insurgency would suddenly revert to a grievance-based insurgency. In this case it would be possible for the Colombian situation to develop into a situation similar to Vietnam or El Salvador. No longer could FARC members be organized into military-like units, wearing uniforms and carrying weapons. Instead, they would become invisible among the population, relying on popular support for food, shelter, and supplies. Given the FARC's history of treatment toward the population—extorting, kidnapping, killing, or coercing them into duty—the necessary support would unlikely be forthcoming.

1. How to Control Territory

The methods and tactics the Colombians use, and the United States supports, to control territory are critical. Clearly the task will require the use of force, and so the immediate question arises as to whether the military or the police should act as the primary COIN organization. The debate always arises about the legitimacy of using military forces to fight an internal threat within the borders of Colombia. Some critics in the United States argue against encouraging the use of the Colombian military to fight the FARC because it blurs the line between military and police roles:

> Critics contend that the United States should not be expanding the role of foreign militaries to perform functions that would not be in line with its own laws or those of other democracies. (The U.S. Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 established the principle prohibiting the use of the armed forces in law enforcement activities.) According to this argument, U.S. assistance counters other U.S. objectives, such as to promote democracy by ensuring civilian control of the military. Instead, it blurs the distinction between police and military functions.[72]

Becker makes several arguments for the use of police over the military. He points out that, "Stronger and more numerous police units will deny access to the guerrillas in the areas where they work, providing the 'clear and hold strategy' that is needed in

[72] Connie Veillette, "Plan Colombia: A Progress Report," *Congressional Research Service* (January 2006): 11.

guerrilla war…"[73] He makes the argument that an oversized military will eventually have to downsize after the defeat of the insurgency, while building up the police force will have no long-term implications because they "will still have an enlarged role to fill in society" after the FARC is defeated.[74]

On the other hand, a RAND report written before 9/11, focused greater attention on the need to strengthen the Colombia's military. [75] Rabasa and Chalk realized early on the importance of establishing a state presence in previously uncontrolled regions. They called for an increase in training by the United States and increased use of force by Colombian military units. This training and use of force should concentrate on two areas. First, to develop new concepts of operations to detect, identify, and attack light infantry targets; second, to regain control of the major roads and navigable rivers that serve as highways for guerrillas and drug traffickers.[76] Dearaujo agreed that, "The best strategy would be to put military pressure on the FARC to bring its leaders to the negotiation table."[77]

In order to have a chance for success, the United States should support all use of force that the Colombians can bring to the fight. The FARC's resiliency and military strength, as well as Colombia's rugged, diverse terrain present enough challenges to require the use of both the military and police. Force alone, however, will be insufficient. U.S. policy must ensure that the Colombians take a more holistic approach that includes social, economic, and political components.

Many scholars contend that military use alone will be insufficient in defeating the FARC. Instead of concentrating on the military aspect, U.S. policy should concentrate on moving "the country's politics toward a settlement of the conflict, as well [as]

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[73] David C. Becker, "Morphing War: Counter-narcotics, Counter-insurgency, and Counter-terrorism Doctrine in Colombia," *Joint Special Operations University White Papers on Terrorism and Counterinsurgency* (2005): 57.

[74] Becker, "Morphing War," 58.

[75] Rabasa and Chalk, *Colombian Labyrinth*, 95.

[76] Ibid., xix.

[77] Emani Dearaujo, "In Need of a Fix: Reforming Plan Colombia," *Harvard International Review* 23, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 9.

strengthen[ing] the country's weak institutions."[78] Marcella makes the best argument, noting that a successful COIN campaign will integrate all components, "History shows that all successful counterinsurgencies in the modern world have had a strong social, economic, and political component to complement the military."[79]

The importance of a holistic approach cannot be overstated. The possibility discussed earlier of the FARC reverting from a resource-based insurgency to a grievance-based insurgency raises an important consideration for the COIN strategy. This shift from would cause the center of gravity to revert from territory to the population. Therefore, as the Colombian government increases its control of territory, it must make every effort to gain popular support. The military and police must be respectful of the local citizenry and avoid human rights violations at all costs. Social, economic, and political aspects of the campaign should immediately follow the control of territory. Only this combined approach will secure the support of the populations, further strengthening the COIN effort.

C. HOW U.S. POLICY COMPARES

Prior to 9/11, U.S. policy support for Plan Colombia specifically prohibited the use of monies for counterinsurgency/counterterror operations in Colombia. Essentially, the United States assessed the FARC through a counterdrug lens. The logic was that "drying up funding from drugs w[ould] undermine the guerrillas' strength."[80] The argument continued that without resources, the FARC would not be able to conduct

[78] Michael Shifter, "Drug War: Colombia Policy Should Not be Terror's Next Victim," *Los Angeles Times*, November 11 2001, Opinion section, 2.

[79] Gabriel Marcella, *Plan Colombia: The Strategic and Operational Imperatives* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2001), 18.

[80] Rabasa and Chalk, summary to *Colombian Labyrinth*, xiv.

attacks, thereby lessening the need for the paramilitaries.[81] Only when the FARC was substantially weakened, would the Colombian government be in an advantageous position to negotiate with the FARC.[82]

There were two fundamental flaws with this approach. First, it assumed that the FARC earned most or all of its money through the drug trade. However, as early as 1999, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, Rand Beers stated that only 30-40 percent of FARC income came from the drug trade.[83] The percentage of FARC wealth earned through the drug trade is a constant source of debate. The fact that the FARC also uses kidnapping and extortion as alternate sources of funding has never been in dispute. Therefore, had the war on drugs been successful, one could anticipate a rise in kidnapping and extortions, rather than a decrease in FARC violence.

This leads to the second flaw of U.S. policy, the assumption that the war on drugs would be successful, which, by most accounts, has not been the case. A recent report by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) announced an increase in price and decrease in quality of cocaine 2005, an indication that supply has decreased.[84] But, this report has been largely unsubstantiated. Overall, it is safe to say that it could never be determined if eliminating the drug trade would have forced the FARC to disband. Ultimately, the U.S. policy benefited the FARC because it prevented the Colombians from using U.S. foreign aid to directly combat the FARC.

1. U.S. Policy Since 9/11

The events of September 11, 2001 caused a fundamental shift in U.S. foreign and domestic policy that will likely remain for decades to come. This shift has had implications for U.S. foreign policy in Colombia. Organizations like the FARC, ELN, and AUC, labeled "terrorist" before 9/11, suddenly drew new attention from the United

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[81] Marcella, *Plan Colombia*, 7.

[82] Jason Vauters and Michael L.R. Smith, "A Question of Escalation – From Counternarcotics to Counterterrorism: Analysing U.S. Strategy in Colombia," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 17, no. 2 (June 2006): 167.

[83] Vauters and Smith, "A Question of Escalation," 166.

[84] Veillette, "Plan Colombia," (2006): 3.

States. It is important to note that, while incorporated into the global war on terror, the FARC is vastly different than Islamist terrorist organizations in the Middle East. Vauters and Smith compare the FARC to Al Qaeda:

> First, Al Qaeda is primarily a clandestine operation widely dispersed around the globe. It coordinates its work through a network of franchises, which include a diverse array of members from several different nations who speak a variety of languages. The FARC, on the other hand, are not clandestine at all. They control large swathes of territory. Their forces resemble an army.[85]

These differences, and the fact that the United States has thus far been unwilling to commit combat troops to Colombia, require a different U.S. policy than in Afghanistan or Iraq.

U.S. aid for counterterror operations in Colombia first became available in 2002, when "the Administration requested, and Congress approved, expanded authority to use U.S. counternarcotics funds for a unified campaign to fight both drug trafficking and terrorist organizations in Colombia."[86] This subtle change to the Andean Counterdrug Initiative represented the first shift in U.S. policy resulting from 9/11. Interestingly, the rest of ACI has remain unchanged, conveying that counterdrugs remains the primary U.S. focus in Colombia.

Therefore, the shift in policy in 2002 indicates that there is no definitive U.S. counterterror policy for Colombia. The Congressional Research Service notes that U.S. policymakers "favor expanding the scope of military assistance to strengthen the ability of Colombian security forces to combat the leftist guerrillas and to expand their control throughout rural areas…"[87] However, specific guidelines on how to do this are nowhere to be found. In essence, Washington is relying on Bogotá to develop the best strategy to defeat the FARC, and hoping they use U.S. money wisely to implement that strategy. The current strategy developed by the Uribe administration appears to be having success.

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[85] Vauters and Smith, "A Question of Escalation," 173.

[86] Connie Veillette, "Plan Colombia," (2006): 3.

[87] Connie Veillette, "Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI) and Related Funding Programs: FY 2005 Assistance," *Congressional Research Service* (May 2005): 11.

D. HOW COLOMBIAN POLICY COMPARES

From the outset, Colombia's goals for Plan Colombia have differed from U.S. goals. As noted, initial U.S. support for Plan Colombia was "to prevent the flow of illegal drugs into the United States, as well as to help Colombia promote peace and economic development because it contributes to regional security in the Andes." On the other hand, Colombia's objectives were "to promote peace and economic development, and increase security."[88] The "global war on terror" has allowed for a convergence of U.S. and Colombian policy. Washington is still very much concerned with the flow of illegal drugs originating from Colombia, but the allowance of U.S. funds to be used for 'counterterror' has given Bogotá the freedom to pursue a security-driven policy.

President Alvaro Uribe, elected in 2002 on a platform of increasing security in Colombia, has specifically targeted the guerrilla and paramilitary threats. Uribe has lived up to his promises taking a hard-line approach in negotiations with the FARC. He has maintained that "the government would only negotiate with those groups who are willing to give up terrorism and agree to a cease-fire."[89] Negotiations with the paramilitaries have begun under Uribe, but the FARC still refuse to lay down their arms.

To increase the pressure on the FARC, Uribe has increased the size of the military and police through a "one-time 1.2% tax on wealthy individuals and businesses."[90] In 2003, the military launched *Plan Patriota*, "a campaign to recapture FARC-held territory."[91] Evidence suggests that this campaign has been successful:

> The Colombian military claims that *Plan Patriota* has reduced FARC ranks from 18,000 to 12,000 in the past year. Information provided by the Office of the Colombian President reports that the campaign was able to take back control of 11 FARC-run villages, destroy more than 400 FARC camps, capture 1,534 explosive devices and 323 gas-cylinder bombs, kill 2,518 combatants, and capture large amounts of ammunition and weapons. With regard to FARC drug trafficking activities, as of September 2004, it

88 Connie Veillette, "Plan Colombia," (2006): 2.

89 Connie Veillette, "Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI) and Related Funding Programs," 12.

90 Ibid., 12.

91 Connie Veillette, "Plan Colombia," (2005): 9.

> was reported that the Colombian military located and destroyed more than 47 tons of solid chemical supplies, 18,000 gallons of liquid precursors, half a ton of cocaine base, and $34,000 in cash.[92]

Despite these reported successes, critics of *Plan Patriota* claim that the war against the FARC will never be won due to Colombia's rugged terrain and the negative repercussions of increased internally displaced persons (IDP):

> The Colombian government reports that displaced persons dropped 37% from 2003, while a Colombian human rights groups reported that levels increased 39% from 208,000 in 2003 to 289,000 in 2004, many of whom have not registered with the Colombian government as displaced.[93]

Fundación Seguridad y Democracia has recently published a number of statistics on violence in Colombia.[94] Between 2001 and 2006 the homicide rate per one hundred thousand inhabitants has significantly dropped from a peak of 65.9 in 2002, to 34.9 in 2006. Kidnappings under Uribe have also decreased by 56% from the previous administration. On the other hand, the expected rise in violent conflicts associated with a military campaign are evident. The total number of battles during Uribe's first term was 8,001, up from 3,211 during the previous administration. The total number of FARC attacks against the police are also up from 963 to 1,580. Despite the increase in violence, "Most observers agree that public safety conditions in Colombia have improved."[95] The question remains will the situation continue to improve? Has Colombia, with the support of U.S. funding, developed a long-term strategy that will defeat the FARC and restore stability in the region?

1. Colombian Policy Since 9/11

President Uribe's administration has developed a comprehensive and effective strategy aimed at defeating the FARC. The first three strategic objectives of Colombia's

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[92] Connie Veillette, "Plan Colombia," (2005): 9.

[93] Ibid., 9-10.

[94] "Informe Especial: La Seguridad en los Últimos Tres Períodos Presidenciales 1994-2006," *Fundación Seguridad y Democracia* http://www.seguridadydemocracia.org, (accessed March 21, 2007).

[95] Connie Veillette, "Plan Colombia," (2006): 8.

Democratic Security and Defense Policy are in the perfect order. First, consolidate state control of Colombia's territory; second, provide security to the population; third, eliminate the illegal drug trade.[96] The Colombians have come to the correct conclusion that only after Colombian territory is under state control will the government be able to strengthen the rule of law, establish economic and social institutions, and build the infrastructure necessary to win the support of the population and defeat the FARC.

It is imperative that Colombia maintains this course of action until the FARC has been defeated or brought to the negotiation table. However, it would be unwise to try to negotiate with the FARC until state control of Colombian territory has been consolidated. Recently, president Uribe moved away from his initial stance of not negotiating with the FARC unless they agreed to lay down their arms. The Uribe administration was engaging the FARC in a possible prisoner exchange until the FARC was blamed for a car bomb that exploded near a military university in Bogotá.[97] The FARC's willingness to perpetrate such acts of terror shows that negotiations at this point would be fruitless.

The argument for negotiating with the FARC will not be appropriate for some time. The Colombians must be in a position of power to negotiate, and must be able to enforce the settlement. Without control of significant amounts of Colombia's territory, the government is still conceding the operational factors of both time and space to the FARC. As long as the FARC controls some territory to establish a base of operation, they can control their destiny. They conduct attacks on their timeline, at minimum risk to themselves. Additionally, their control of territory allows them to continue in drug trafficking, providing them with enough money to buy weapons, thus increasing their operational factor of force. From this perspective, the Colombian government is a long way off before it will be in a position to negotiate a peace settlement with the FARC.

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[96] Colombian Ministry of Defense, "Democratic Security and Defense Policy," June 2003, 31.

[97] Colleen W. Cook, "Colombia: Issues for Congress," *Congressional Research Service* (November 2006): 3.

E. CONCLUSION

Colombia must continue to place pressure on the FARC in hopes of eliminating one more illegally armed group operating within its borders. The measures of success are good thus far. Colombian police now have a presence in 95% of Colombia's municipalities. Homicide rates are down by almost half between 2002 and 2005. Kidnappings are also down from 3,700 in 2000 to 800 in 2005.[98] These numbers indicate that the GOC is doing a better job at providing security to its citizens.

Another important measure of success will be the amount of money the FARC earns through the drug trade. FARC revenues from drug trafficking for 2003 are estimated to range from $200 million to over $600 million.[99] The ranges of income vary greatly because it is difficult to determine the how much the FARC earns through the illicit drug economy. An easier indicator might prove to be the land under FARC control or hectares used for coca cultivation. In terms of hectares under coca cultivation, the Office of National Drug Control Policy reported a decline of 8% between 2004 and 2005. The above measures are all positive indicators that Colombia is moving in the right direction.

Under Plan Colombia, Washington recognized the ties of the FARC to the illicit drug economy, and decided that the best way to defeat the FARC was to attack the drug industry, thereby eliminating the FARC's strength.[100] However, Plan Colombia was primarily a counterdrug policy. Therefore, the strategies implemented, such as eradication and alternative development, were aimed more specifically at counterdrugs than counterterror. It could be argued that prior to 9/11 the United States did not really care about the existence of the FARC, and eliminating the FARC's resource base was only a convenient by-product of Washington's primary concern, reducing the amount of Colombian drugs entering the United States. Gordon Passage, writing in 2000, made this observation about U.S. policy,

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[98] Colleen W. Cook, "Colombia: Issues for Congress," *Congressional Research Service* (November 2006): 4.

[99] Ibid., 7.

[100] Rabasa and Chalk, summary to *Colombian Labyrinth*, xiv.

> We have tied our policy toward Colombia in a knot by determinedly confining our objectives—and therefore our supporting assistance—to counternarcotics programs, repeatedly reaffirming that we would not be drawn into that country's internal strife.[101]

By most accounts Plan Colombia has been largely ineffective. Despite successful eradication in certain regions, the overall flow of drugs into the United States has remained stable, despite these successes.[102] Therefore, it could never be determined if drying up the FARC's resources from the illicit drug economy would have forced the FARC to disband. Since 9/11, there has been no specific U.S. counterterror policy to replace Plan Colombia. Instead, there have only been modest changes to the Andean Counterdrug Initiative, which now allows counterdrug monies to also be used for counterterror operations.

The United States National Security Strategy for Terrorism is a broad document that lumps the FARC in with all other terrorist organizations in the world. It speaks in broad strategies and does not identify the specific strategies needed for any one terrorist organization. The closest the Strategy comes to identifying territory as a center of gravity is on page 22:

> The United States will work in concert with our international and regional partners to ensure effective governance over ungoverned territory, which could provide sanctuary to terrorists. Where there is a clear indication of terrorist activity in these areas, the United States, in conjunction with our friends and allies, will work to eliminate these terrorist sanctuaries and preclude any future access to these areas by terrorist organizations.[103]

The Strategy relies heavily on the host nation to take the lead in developing a strategy to defeat terrorists within its borders. Colombia's Democratic Security and Defense Policy has correctly identified Colombian territory as a center of gravity and therefore should be fully supported. However, Colombia has a history of reversing its course against the FARC with each new administration. It is important for the United States to strike while

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[101] David Passage, *The United States and Colombia: Untying the Gordian Knot*, (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2000), 8.

[102] Connie Veillette, "Plan Colombia," (2006): 3.

[103] U.S. Department of State, "National Security Strategy for Combating Terrorism," February 2003, 22, http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030214-7.html (accessed April 18, 2007).

the iron is hot. Equally important, if the next Colombian president moves away from the Democratic Security and Defense Policy, the United States must be ready to pressure a return to the present course of action.

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V. CONCLUSION

The events of September 11, 2001 and the resulting implications for U.S. foreign policy will be felt for decades to come. U.S. citizens were shocked and horrified on that catastrophic day. The Bush administration and Congress quickly responded with the overwhelming support of the public. A counterattack against Al Qaeda, the perpetrators of the attack, was soon underway, but the Bush administration did not stop there. A "global war on terror" was proclaimed, with far-reaching implications that perhaps are still not yet fully understood. Currently in the spotlight are the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Meanwhile, hidden in the shadows are other regional conflicts, including Colombia.

Colombia has had its turn in the U.S. spotlight in the past, primarily through the "war on drugs." U.S. concern over the import of cocaine and heroin from Colombia remains, although it receives much less publicity than the "war on terror." The United States still contributes billions of dollars in foreign aid in an effort to restrict the flow of narcotics across U.S. borders. The "war on terror" has altered how that money is being used, without significantly altering U.S. policy for the region. The purpose of this thesis has been to determine the implications of the "war on terror" on both U.S. and Colombian policy and the strategy needed to defeat the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

This thesis purposely avoided the debate over the definition of terrorism and the vagueness of the "global war on terror." Those debates can be saved for another forum. Instead, this thesis has tried to answer questions given the current state of the facts. That is, the United States is at war against terrorists, the FARC has been designated a terrorist organization by the United States, and the United States is allowing U.S. foreign aid to Colombia to be used for counterterror operations. This raises the question of what kind of counterterror policy should be pursued in Colombia.

The FARC is an insurgency that uses terrorist tactics. Therefore, to understand the FARC better, this thesis began by analyzing insurgencies and their characteristics.

Since the end of the Cold War there has been great debate over two types of insurgency—grievance-based and greed-based. The notion of grievance-based insurgencies was left over from the Cold War when insurgencies arose out of a sector of the population that had specific grievances with their respective governments. The concept of greed-based insurgencies was introduced after the collapse of the Soviet Union when it was theorized that some insurgencies formed to profit from lootable resources.

Analyzing the FARC within this dichotomy has proven to be troublesome. There has been no general agreement on whether the FARC is a grievance- or greed-based insurgency. In fact, the debate has dragged on with seemingly no end in sight. This led to less than successful approaches to combating the FARC. From the U.S. perspective, the perception of the FARC as merely an organized syndicate in the drug trade led to the policy approaches taken by the Andean Counterdrug Initiative and U.S. support for Plan Colombia.

An analysis of the characteristics of grievance- and greed-based insurgencies shows that the FARC does not fit into either category. The relationship to the illicit economy is the key characteristic difference between the two insurgencies that more or less shapes the remaining characteristics. A grievance-based insurgency generally has a limited relationship with the illicit economy, relying primarily on popular support to fund the movement and challenge the government over specific grievances. In other words, illicit economic activities are undertaken to supplement funding from the population, not as the reason for the creation of the organization. On the other hand, a greed-based insurgency's primary reason for being is to profit from the illicit economy, usually through the sale of lootable resources. A greed-based insurgency's grievances with the government derive from the government challenging the insurgency's access to lootable resources and the ability to make a profit.

We see, then, how the two types of insurgency differ in their relationships with the government and population. A grievance-based insurgency's relationship with the government is always hostile (though not necessarily violent) due to the grievances of the insurgency, whether they are political, economic, ethnic, or religious based. In contrast, a

greed-based insurgency's relationship to the government becomes hostile only when the government challenges the insurgency's access to lootable resources. Without such a challenge, a greed-based insurgency would be quite content to remain under the government's radar, making profits without attracting government attention.

The relationship with the population also differs between the two insurgencies. Grievance-based insurgencies rely on popular support to sustain and propel the movement. Therefore, they cultivate a friendly relationship with the population to encourage recruitment. Greed-based insurgencies, on the other hand, do not require popular support because their illegal activities fund their movement. A greed-based insurgency only needs to recruit enough cadres to manage its illicit profit-making operation. Once the organization achieves sufficient size, the insurgency has no further need to cultivate a relationship with the population.

The relationship to other armed actors also varies between the two types of insurgency. The grievance-based insurgency's reliance on the population and grievances with the government has two implications. In terms of other insurgencies within the same borders, a grievance-based insurgency may take a positive or negative position. On the one hand, another insurgency pulls potential recruits away. On the other hand, two grievance-based insurgencies may decide to join forces to achieve their goals, momentarily setting aside differences in the ultimate pursuit of overthrowing the government. Due to the hostile relationship with the government, a grievance-based insurgency will always have a hostile (most likely violent) relationship with government armed actors, such as the military or police. Contrastingly, a greed-based insurgency's relationship with other armed actors that challenge their access to the illicit economy, whether state or non-state, is always hostile. Yet, if other armed actors do not present a direct challenge to the insurgency's ability to make a profit, the relationship will be fairly neutral.

Lastly, there is the insurgencies' organizational structure, in terms of size, strength and cohesion. A grievance-based insurgency's cohesion should be relatively tight assuming all who join share in the ideological convictions of the organization. If the insurgency fails to properly indoctrinate its cadres, the potential for internal schisms

increases. A greed-based insurgency is in a similar situation although the focus is on its relationship to the illicit economy. Cohesion should remain tight, as all involved are interested in making a profit. Cohesion may suffer if cadres attempt to split from the parent organization in order to profit on their own. Size and strength of a grievance-based insurgency are ultimately dependent on the relationship with the population. The organization will grow depending on its recruiting abilities, and its strength will be derived from funding support of the population. The size of a greed-based organization is regulated by the number needed to maximize profits. Strength is derivative of the ability to profit with the least amount of intervention by other armed actors.

Unfortunately, neither of these ideal type insurgencies adequately characterizes the FARC. Therefore, this thesis has introduced a third type of insurgency, resource-based, that more accurately captures the characteristics of the FARC. The FARC grew out of the Colombian communist party with specific ideological grievances against the government. Like a grievance-based insurgency, it relied on popular support, mostly among peasants, to sustain the movement. The FARC traditionally engaged in kidnapping and extortion, but these tactics were directed at the state or the middle- and upper-classes. The examination of the remaining characteristics of the early FARC demonstrated that the organization began as a grievance-based insurgency.

The FARC's decision to participate in narcotrafficking caused an evolution in the organization, and an examination of its characteristics bears this out. Originally, the FARC continued to cultivate a relationship with the peasant population by "protecting" them from drug traffickers and providing social services. The most dramatic change occurred in 1997 when the FARC faced a strong challenge by the AUC and Bogotá. In the face of this challenge, the FARC ultimately chose to protect its relationship with the illicit economy over its relationship with the population. Statistics published by NGO's as well as the Colombian government show massacres and human rights violations committed by the FARC increased drastically after 1997.

The willingness to forgo popular support to protect access to lootable resources led many to conclude that the FARC was merely another drug cartel. But what explains their continued issuance of grievances and attacks against the government? These two

characteristics are indisputably representative of grievance-based insurgencies. The FARC's declaration of grievances must be taken at face-value because there is no way to prove that they are false. The attacks against the government might be explained as a greed-based insurgency reacting to challenges by other armed actors, but this does not seem likely in the FARC's case. If the FARC only cared about drug trafficking, however, one would expect them to act more like drug cartels whose only interactions with the state are to defend their interests from military/police attack or attempt to buy elected officials. Also, FARC members display no ostentatious signs of wealth, a common characteristic of organized criminals. Continued FARC attacks, mostly targeting government actors, is evidence that the FARC is more than just a greed-based insurgency.

Hence, the need to introduce the term resource-based insurgency. This term is used to describe insurgencies that demonstrate grievances, yet also maintain an interest in the illicit economy. In the case of the FARC, this affected the insurgency's relationship to the population and other armed actors. A resource-based insurgency is able to forgo popular support because the profits from the illicit economy allow the organization to buy the necessary food, supplies, and equipment. A resource-based insurgency still needs recruits to create an organization large enough to sustain its struggle against the government, so it resorts to coercion. Coerced recruits hamper the internal cohesion of the organization because they often do not share the ideological convictions of the insurgency.

In addition, the relationship of a resource-based insurgency with the government and other armed actors differs from that of grievance- or greed-based insurgencies. Like a grievance-based insurgency, a resource-based insurgency has a hostile, if not violent, relationship with the government. Like a greed-based insurgency, a resource-based insurgency reacts hostilely to any non-state armed actors that challenge its access to lootable resources. In the case of the FARC, this challenge came from the AUC.

In sum, a resource-based insurgency adopts some characteristics from both grievance- and greed-based insurgencies. The relationship to the government mimics grievance-based insurgencies, the relationship to the illicit economy mimics greed-based

insurgencies. The relationship to other armed actors assumes the characteristics of both. The relationship to the population develops a new twist altogether. The population loses favor in the eyes of the insurgency, yet cadres are still coerced to increase the size, thus possibly diminishing cohesion.

The literature on grievance- and greed-based insurgencies identified centers of gravity for each type. In the case of grievance-based insurgencies, the center of gravity is the population. The population sustains the movement by providing recruits as well as the primary source of funding. In previous battles with this type of insurgency, the state has used a "hearts and minds" (HAM) or cost/benefit approach to encourage the population against supporting the insurgency. In the case of greed-based insurgencies, the center of gravity is the finances earned from illegal enterprises. This has usually translated into economic sanctions imposed by the state and/or the strengthening of institutions that punish criminal behavior.

This thesis argues that the center of gravity for resource-based insurgencies is territory for two reasons. First, territory provides the insurgency access to lootable resources, which is the most fundamental necessity to be able to profit from the illicit economy. Removing, or restricting, access to territory attacks the source of the problem, rather than targeting finances already earned from the sale of lootable resources. Second, although a resource-based insurgency no longer relies on the population for funding, it still needs cadres to carry out its political objectives. The FARC achieved this by coercing recruits to join the insurgency. To counter this, the state must be able to provide security to those vulnerable to coercion. The first, and most important, step to achieving this objective is to establish control, or a monopoly of the use of force, throughout all its territory. By doing so, the state can simultaneously provide security and implement a HAM or cost/benefit campaign, if necessary.

The transition of the FARC from a grievance-based to resource-based insurgency obviously has implications for U.S. and GOC policy, but those implications have been far from obvious. This thesis has shown that U.S. and GOC views of the FARC have often been at odds, leading to conflicting policy approaches. Washington considered the FARC primarily through the lens of the war on drugs, while Bogotá realized the greater

security threat the FARC presented. The war on drugs has been largely ineffective, and the inability to use U.S. funds for operations against the FARC has left the Colombians losers on all fronts.

The shift in U.S. policy post-9/11 may have provided the Colombians the means to effectively combat the FARC. Important from both countries' perspectives is to ensure a clear understanding of the nature of the FARC, if any policy is going to be effective in the long term. This thesis has hopefully contributed to the current literature on the FARC, and deepened the understanding of the threat. Specifically, by looking at the different characteristics of insurgencies, this thesis introduced the FARC as a resource-based insurgency with territory as its center of gravity. This theory provided the backbone for analysis of current U.S. and GOC policy and recommendations for the future.

The analysis of the case study shows that the Colombians have, indeed, developed a coherent, credible policy (the Democratic Security and Defense Policy and *Plan Patriota*), and that it is being implemented with some success. What is less evident is whether U.S. policymakers have recognized the FARC for what it is, and have truly committed to helping the Colombians defeat the FARC. Certainly, there is no indication of that in U.S. policy toward Colombia other than allowing monies to be used for "counterterror" operations. What remains to be seen is whether the United States develops a more coherent counterterror policy in Colombia, or if they continue to rely on Colombia's policy. If there is continued reliance on Colombian policy, Washington must ensure that Bogotá continues along its current path. Deviations, perhaps after the next election, must be dealt with appropriately if funding is to continue. Given Colombia's history of reversing strategies against the FARC, it is imperative that a long-term strategy is implemented in Colombia—one that will remain in place long after Bush and Uribe leave office.

There are future lessons to be learned from the Colombia case, as well. Allowing the host nation to develop its own strategy is an important model for the United States to follow in future campaigns in the "war on terror." The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrate the limited ability of the United States military to conduct sustained

operation in two localities. This could become a recurring problem unless the governments that host insurgent or "terrorist" organizations take responsibility for COIN/counterterror operations within their borders. This is also important because it prevents the United States from applying a "cookie-cutter" approach to counterterror operations against different organizations. This thesis has shown that there are different types of insurgencies, each with a different center of gravity. Thus, different policies and strategies must be utilized to defeat them. The host nation, with hopefully the most intimate knowledge of the threat, should be relied on to construct and implement the policy. They should also be the main providers of troops for the conflict. The United States, for its part, should supply funding, equipment, and training. Most importantly, U.S. policymakers must strive to gain the best possible understanding of each threat to ensure U.S. monies are well spent. This seems the only logical approach to fighting a "global" war on terror.

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